

## **June is Aphasia/ TBI Awareness Month**

This month's health article addresses traumatic brain injury (TBI) which occurs when a sudden trauma or head injury disrupts the function of the brain. Causes include damage by explosive devices, falls, and vehicle or motorcycle accidents. TBI has been called the signature wound of the IRAQ and Afghanistan wars. More than 260,000 veterans from OIF and OEF have been diagnosed with TBI. It also seems to be more common in the general population than previously thought. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 1.7 million Americans have a traumatic brain injury each year.

A veteran can take steps to manage TBI symptoms such as: getting enough sleep; write things down or use electronic reminders to help with memory; check with a trusted individual when making decisions; avoid alcohol, caffeine, and some cold medications that could make symptoms worse; recognize triggers; take up a hobby or recreational activity, and talk with others. It's hard to handle the effects of TBI on your own. Consider connecting with your family doctor, your local VA Medical Center or Vet Center, a hearing or eye specialist, your closest VA polytrauma facility specially designed to care for veterans with TBI; mental health provider or therapist, and a spiritual or religious advisor. There are a number of online resources available for information and support.